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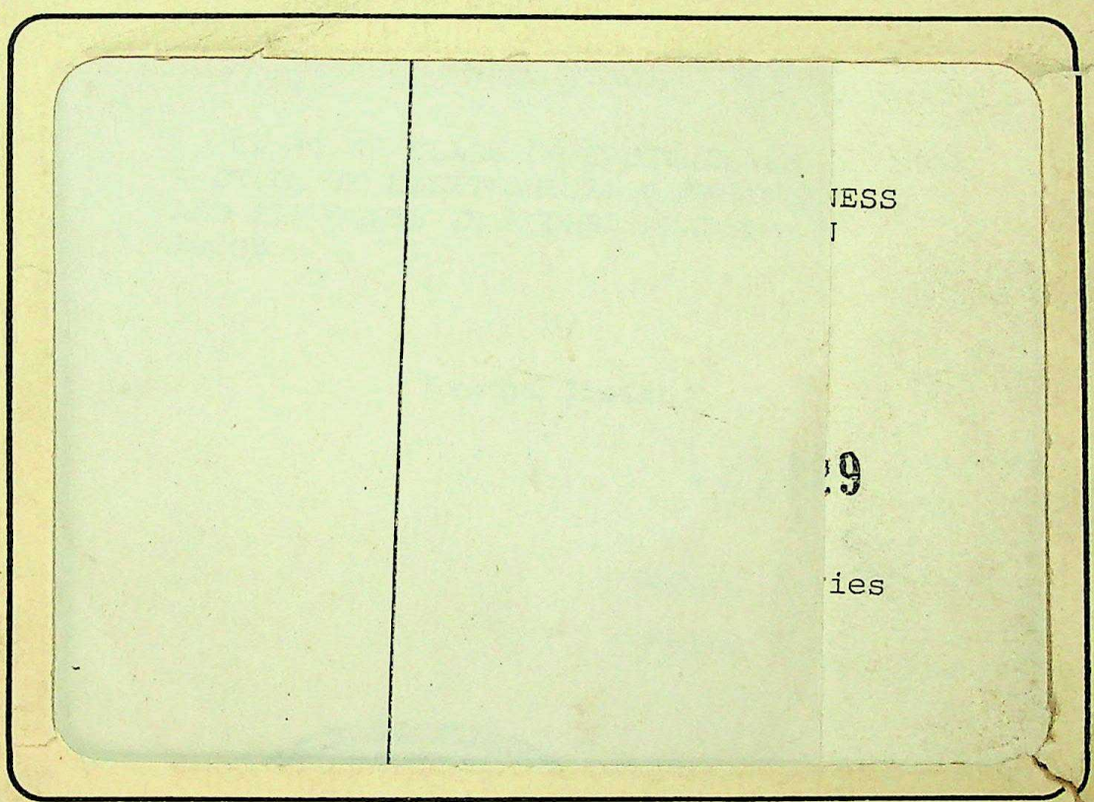

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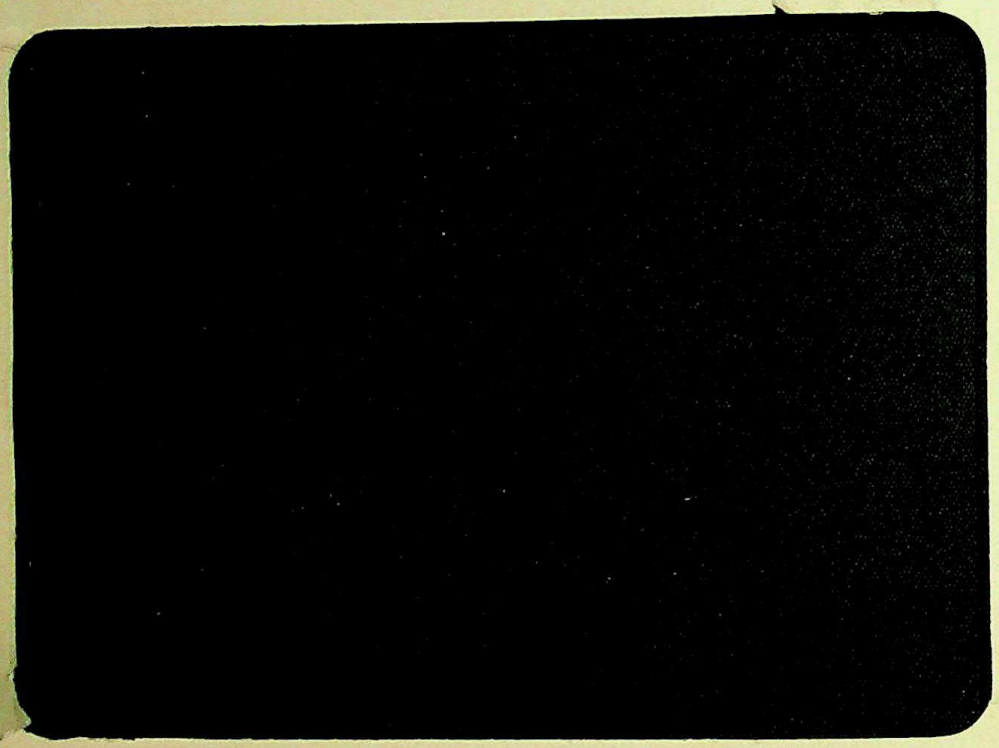

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CASTE OR CLASS OR CASTE-CLASS

A STUDY IN DALITBAHUJAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND STRUGGLES IN ANDHRA PRADESH IN 1980S

by

Kancha Ilaiah*

Writing the history of Dalitbahujan (SC, ST, & OBC) movements, so far, has been done by two types of scholars/historians: (a) progressive scholars/historians coming from the west and (b) progressive scholars/historians coming from upper castes of India.[1] History written by such scholars failed to sensitivise the scholarly world on the question of caste. There are two basic reasons for such a situation. Firstly, unless writing of history of anti-caste movements is done by the organic intelligentsia of a given movement, such an history does not express the inner voice of that movement - it does not become a living history which can inspire the subjective forces that are fighting to change the objective reality of sub-ordination and exploitation. The makers of history themselves should become the writers of history so that the interaction between the history and makers of history is a living interaction. In this sense both Western and Indian upper caste scholars/historians were the 'other' and they wrote the Dalitbahujan history in their voice

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and hence the very difference between 'others' and 'us' distorted the living spirit of that history. Not that one should question or doubt the bonafide sympathies of scholars/historians involved in such writing, in fact, some of them were extremely committed to the Dalitbahujan cause but, the objective limitations of the very modes of living of the historians and the makers of history itself differs. The organicness, therefore, is more fundamental for perceiving the reality in its true spirit.[2] In this sense the history of Dalitbahujans is a history of white pages. It, therefore, now needs to be written to envigourate the Dalitbahujan forces of history and to open up a proper dialogue between their own history and their on going struggles.

Secondly, the writing of Dalitbahujan history so far centered around Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu as these two regions produced outstanding personalities like Mahatma Jotirao Phule, Dr. Ambedkar and Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy and also these regions conducted struggles in the early nationalist period which hagemonised the anti-caste discourse in the process of nationalist political discourses. As a result the Dalitbahujan movements were not presented as spread over movements and the paradigms of these discourses are limited to liberal democratic paradigms as the leading actors of those two movements. Ambedkar and Periyar -

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operated within the liberal democratic paradigms.[3] Further, in the context of Maharashtra, the discourse centers around Phule and Ambedkar and in the context of Tamil Nadu it centers around Periyar and in the process the expression of mass consciousness in such movements got subsumed and the plurality of it was never examined.

Ever since writing of South Asian history has been done in the language of subaltern vs colonial, imperial forces by the Cambridge school of Indian Scholars (Ranajit Guha and others) all Indian struggles against colonialism/imperialism are being understood in terms of peoples subalternity and colonial/imperial dominance.[4] While the argument that class structures of society get glossed over by the subaltern category is an issue that further needs to be problamatised but it does not need an elaborate examination of Subaltern studies that these studies never took caste subordination and exploitation within Indian civil society and state into consideration as serious issue of study. The nationalist historiography - of liberal or of the Marxist or the subaltern historiography, all of them did not differentiate between Gandhi and Ambedkar or Nehru and Periyar. Though all these leaders must have made attempts to lead the people of same constituency - differing in their ideological moorings they did not represent the same masses. While Gandhi and Nehru represented the

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interests of Indian upper caste, feudal and bourgeoisie forces, Ambedkar and Periyar represented the poor, oppressed and suppressed masses. If we need to understand the caste class positions of subordinated and exploited Dalitbahujans, we must characterize them as sub-subaltern people.

In this paper I shall make an attempt to examine the changing contours of sub-subaltern consciousness in the post Independence, Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is situated between Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and in the scholarly world it is considered to be a blind spot for Dalit struggles and as a bright spot for class struggles, as this has been the place where the historic Telangana Armed Struggle and subsequently Naxalite revolt took place. Because of this Communist tradition Andhra seems to throw up a different kind of Dalitbahujan ideological discourse which seems to be much more radical than what has been happening in the classical lands of Dalitbahujan movement viz., Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Because of the failure of both the struggles in transforming the caste-class relations in the post independence period, particularly after the linguistic Telugu nationality began to show signs of development of regional capital and restructured class relations, with in the sphere of subordination and domination, began to rigidify the caste structures. This process also witnessed increased number of atrocities on Dalitbahujans

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and the Dalitbahujan forces began to get more and more caste conscious in order to use caste as the political instrument of organisation and mobilization of masses (as against the earlier forms of class mobilization). But, at the same time, because of the communist tradition Andhra seems to throw up a different kind of Dalitbahujan ideological discourse which seems to show much more radical signs than what has been happening in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu in 1980s and early 90s.

As I am writing this paper as a participant observer who had involved in these movements as an activist, I have both an advantage and disadvantage in writing this piece of Dalitbahujan history. Advantage because I know some of the finer inner aspects of the movements, disadvantage because on many an aspect I may draw subjective conclusions because I took positions on ideological questions in the process of shaping up of the movements. But any participant historian can over come the limitation of drawing subjective conclusions if one privileges the peoples consciousness over the consciousness of the historian. However, no history is free from biases and it is unrealistic to expect the organic Dalitbahujan history to be absolutely unbiased.

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WHY 1980s?

During this period two important incidents viz, Karamchedu and Chundur took place and these two incidents radically restructured the content of political discourse in Andhra Pradesh. With the occurring of Karamchedu in July 1985 the civil society in Andhra Pradesh in general and the coastal districts in particular, seems to have undergone a change. The gradually changing undercurrents of post colonial Andhra have expressed themselves violently and the compartmentalized caste society began to break the walls of caste surreptitiously built by Brahminism over the years. The changed discourse began to take place not because of conventional Ambedkarites whose main work, so far, was confined to appeasing the ruling class, upper caste politicians and bureaucrats to get some jobs for Dalits but more because of Dalit Communists and rationalists who earlier had refused to consider Ambedkar as an anti-caste revolutionary and some times even dismissed him as casteist as upper caste communists had done. Karamchedu is a point of departure both for Andhra political history and also for the Ambedkarite movement because Andhra politics began to undergo a metamorphosis in terms of its very political discourse. All political parties since then began to change their strategy and programmes. The word 'Dalit' had acquired a definite place in every party's

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agenda. Karamchedu broke the silence of all the parties because Dalitbahujans who earlier were mere janda mochetollu (flag carriers) and the "upper" caste leaders by and large came from the rich and landlord families were speakers, leaders, writers in a word the brains of the movements, began to be asked most disturbing questions. How long shall we remain mere flag holders? Do we have the brains to make speeches, take up pens and write? They also began to ask "do not we have the energy and ability to lead movements and parties"? They posed specific but dialectical questions about their abilities, contribution and so on. The arguments of Dalit organic activists drew heavily from the experience of class politics. In the arena of culture, literature and art, Dalit politics also began to break the Brahminical idiom.

The long tradition of communist history, Telangana Armed Struggle and Naxalbari Armed Struggle, though established a hegemony of upper castes, all political parties earlier used Dalitbahujans as their mobilization base. If the bourgeoisie parties had done that to get votes, the communist parties had done that to advance their movements. In the process the Dalitbahujan masses got some marginal benefits and a small section of people also emerged as leaders, writers but that small section could not play an independent assertive ideological and political role.

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From among the ranks of Communist movement very popular song composers, dancers and story tellers emerged. To pick up a few outstanding names Nassar,[5] a burrakatha performer, Suddala Hanumanth,[6] a song composer and singer and the legendary song composer and performing singer Gaddar[7] emerged from the communist/revolutionary ranks. No doubt because of the communist discourse the working masses and their culture, their art and their literature got respectability. From Suddala Hanumanth's Vettichakiri song to Anjaiah's[8] (another revolutionary song composer) Urumanadira, Eaa wada Manadira song working class culture had acquired a literary stature. However the literature, songs, poems, stories and even theoretical articles did not speak about caste in clear terms. The most exploited castes like Malas, Madigas, Chakalis, Mangalis did not become the focal point of communist writing at all.

Karamchedu broke this silence and forced the organic revolutionary-cum-Dalit-poet Gaddar to write his historic song "Dalit Pululamma - Are! Karamchedu Bhooswamula Toti Kale - badi Nilabadi Poruchesina Dalita Pululamma"[9] (Dalit Tigers - the tigers who fought the Karamchedu land-lords by standing up and facing them). The post karamchedu period, in fact produced several Dalit leaders, speakers, writers and songsters who became the pillars of Dalitbahujan consciousness. This consciousness began to construct a

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theory of its own liberation. Political autonomy of Dalitbahujan organic intellectuals began to emerge in this atmosphere. This autonomy finally led to formation of Dalit Maha Sabha, Bahujan Samaj Party and also Bahujan Republican Party by K.G. Satyamurthy, a former Communist revolutionary. The emergence of BSP in early 1990s and its recent contest for all the Assembly seats, though did not create any base for itself in the state assembly, every village now has conscious Dalitbahujan leadership which can contest the upper caste politico-economic hegemony and resist the upper caste atrocities on Dalitbahujans. It is a fact that today caste draws the battle lines between Dalitbahujans having emerged from a mixed experience of caste and class and feudal upper castes, who do not want to give up their hegemony and control all over the state. In order to understand the nature of the emerging caste consciousness at the village and Mandal levels it is important to look into the history of contemporary Dalit-bahujan movement.

PRE - KARAMCHEDU MOVEMENT :

Though the Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh can be traced back to 1930s and 40s, the pre-Karamchedu move-ment centered its activities around coastal districts and Hyderabad city. The Pre-Karamchedu movement has three

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political streaks. (1) Dalits organizing themselves into independent movement, (2) Dalits within the broad Congress movement and administration and (3) Dalits as an integral part of the Communist movement.

INDEPENDENT DALIT MOVEMENT

The Dalits who organized themselves into independent Ambedkarite movement slowly created a consciousness of community identity and focussed its attention on spreading the message of Ambedkar. This movement established the youth associations, employees associations and a section of them concentrated on spreading the consciousness about the need for reservations. After the conversion of Ambedkar to Buddhism a small section also concentrated on converting untouchables into Neo-Buddhisim. However, Tirupathi a state Government employee, who got converted into Buddhism himself wrote a small Telugu booklet on Buddha.[10] Tirupathi who comes from an East Godavari labouring Dalit family belonged to first generation of educated youth who learnt their alphabets on sand grounds in 1910s. He began to organize Dalit employees into a socially conscious force in 1930-40s which began to look back to its community basically in terms of upliftment.[11] The SC Employees Associations became the main agent of establishing Ambedkar statues in villages, towns and urban centers.

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The installation of Ambedkar Statue and celebration of his birth and death anniversaries became the main aspect of Dalit mobilization in 1950s and 60s. But the SC Employees Associations and Ambedkar Youth Associations slowly got split into Buddhist and non-Buddhist associations. The movement produced a consciousness of the diabolic hold of sanscritization over Dalit culture and established a caste identity. It attempted to retain the independent identity by establishing the Scheduled Caste Federation of India founded by Ambedkar and subsequently by establishing the Republican Party of India, a political party founded by him later. But wherever this movement was strong several Dalits whose nomenclatures had the roots in "Iah"-- Periaiah, Yellaiah, Pochaiah, Pichiah etc. sanscritized themselves by adopting Brahminical names like Murthy, Sastry, etc and the Sudra 'upper' caste titles like Rao and Reddy etc. This was in a way rooted in the Arya Samaj culture that spread to coastal districts before the Ambedkarite movement spread. The striking example of this phenomenon is changing the name of the Adi-Andhra Dalit leader, Balaiah, into Bhagya Reddy Varma who was one of the first converts into Buddhism in 1910s.[12] The political mobilization of Bhaghya Reddy Varma produced a dual consciousness, (a) it organized Dalits as Dalits and (b) ideologically it was rooted in a retrograde move of

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sanscritizing "untouchables". In East and West Godavari districts several Dalits adopted suffixes like Murthy, Sastry, Rao and Reddy. Ambedkar was not seen by the movement as a Dalit philosopher and as an ideologue but was seen as an identity maker and, of course, in the realm of theory he was seen more as a constitutionalist but certainly not as an institution breaker. In retrospect, it appears that his movement, in spite or Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism and in spite his opposition to Hinduism, was operating with in the fold of Hinduism. It hardly made any attempt to Dalitise the consciousness of people. However, despite these limitations, it produced the earliest Dalit writers like Kusuma Darmanna,[13] Jala Ranga Swamy,[14] Nakka Chinna Venkaiah in 1920s and 30s.[15] Kusuma Dharmanna organized Dalits into Indian nationalist movement and at the same time made them conscious about their basic rights in terms of untouchability and caste. He was a powerful speaker, writer and organizer. He wrote the famous poem "Maakoddee Nalla Doratanam" (We do not want the black lordship), which asserted that not only Britishers should go out of India but the upper caste lordship should also go. It is said that Kusuma Dharamanna used to organize meetings in which he would invite a strong Dalit man to the dais and invite an upper caste boy of 7 to 8 years old and ask him to address the strong Dalit man. The upper caste boy

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would call him in demeaning manner are (rascal) vaadu (that fellow) etc. He would also ask the Dalit man to respond to upper caste boy. He would naturally address that boy in plural in shockingly obedient tone. He would then tell the masses that in physical terms, though the Dalit man is much stronger than the upper caste boy, mentally he is enslaved to the upper caste boy. He would, then, ask the Dalits to revolt against that mental enslavement.[16]

THE CONGRESS CONTRIBUTION

The Harijanisation of Dalitwadas by creating a set of Khadi clad SC leaders and cadres generated a new aspiration for education among SCs. Particularly in coastal district the Dalitwadas became centers of political activity, particularly, at the time of elections starting with the first general elections in 1952. The Khadi clad leadership at one level heralded a new consciousness among SCs to the extent that they became a kind of Pyravikars (middlemen) who began to learn the administrative secrecies of the state and in turn circulated that administrative information among the Dalitwadas. Some of the congress activists while living in the same Dalitwadas in the same shed would sit in a Government car or in a car of congress upper caste leader and come to his Wada. However servitudinal relationship this

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person has with the upper caste leader the relationship between Dalit leader and an upper caste leader crossed the boundaries of feudal and varnadharma relationship. Thus in 1950s, 60s and 70s a whole range of educated youth emerged.

Particularly in the post 1970s the political process initiated by Indira Gandhi established a direct rapport between Congress and Dalitwadas this had a visible impact in creating a Dalit elite base. The Dalit elite, that began to emerge in the Dalitwadas where there was no private property, has different sociopolitical characteristics when compared to upper caste elite, which basically survives on reproducing private property structures. The Dalit elite had to survive by creating a consciousness of education and employment at a time when the Communist movement focussed its attention on the increase of wages. The consciousness of education forced the Government to open up a host of SC welfare hostels and through reservation a small section of educated youth was getting a regular salary income. The Dalit elite that was emerging from the congress fold, however, restricted its consciousness to the process of Harijanisation, to education, employment and marginalised leadership. It was far from autonomous political movement.

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The Congress Dalit group acknowledged the identity role of Ambedkar but operated with in Gandhi's paradigm of Harijanisation. The scheduled caste wing with in the Congress operated at two levels. It used the image of Ambedkar to acquire ministerial positions and to take up pyravee cum upliftment operations. It made the state adopt the 'Harijan' (sons and daughters of God) concept to which Ambedkar was strongly opposed. In allocation of funds or in establishing social welfare hostels, the concept of 'Harijan' became a very important component of state policy so much so that even in remote corners of the state the schedule caste families would enumerate their family names as Harijan.[17] The period preceding the Karamchedu incident noticed an interesting phenomenon. Whenever the Communist parties demanded radical reforms from the state, the state increased its doses of welfare to 'Harijans'. In fact, for a long time welfare and 'Harijan' almost became synonymous. During this phase because of the Congress-Harijan pressure group more than because of money, land or education, the Harijanisation process penetrated into untouchable wadas (localities). Though it created a rift between the SCs and OBCs since the OBCs began to feel neglected because of constant propaganda of 'Harijan welfare', the congress mode of Harijanisation produced two sets of organic leaders from SCs. One set

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was that of political leaders who could manage to get political position and power. It is from this section that the first Dalit Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Damodaram Sanjeevaiah, emerged in 1960s. He also managed to become the first SC AICC President. Below him there were several MPs and MLAs district level leaders who were Khadi clad Dalit leaders. As leaders they were more visible than OBCs because till early seventies there were no reservations for OBCs in the state.

In the literary field the anti-colonial struggle produced two powerful writers, Gurram Jashuva (1895-1972)[18] and Boyee Bheemanna (1911-living).[19] Gurram Jashuva a son of an untouchable woman and an OBC (Golla) man identified himself more with his mother's clan than with his father's. He was the first untouchable poet who wrote more powerful poetry in classical Telugu language than any one of his contemporary upper caste Telugu poets. His poetic themes varied but the best and most powerful Kavvyam is Gabbilam (Bat) with which he symbolized untouchables. Jashuva was a strange mixture of Gandhi and Ambedkar certainly an assertive anti-brahmin conscious Dalit poet. A very popular story is in circulation about his wit and acumen. Once travelling in a train Jushuva was said to have recited his powerful imagery poems to the Brahmins who happened to sit across him in his compartment. Having heard the

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poems the Brahmins applauded him, but seeing his colour (he was very black) they became curious about his caste. They then asked him who are you? Jashuva replied "I am a Madiga". But the Brahmins disbelieved that a Madiga family could produce such a brilliant poet. Then one Brahmin said may be "he must have been born to a Brahmin man". Not so surprised Jashuva (who was said to have gone through several of such experiences) decided to teach them a lesson and recited a difficult poem of his and asked the Brahmin pandits to explain the meaning. None of the Brahmins could explain the meaning and then he shot back "then all of you must have been born to Madiga men".

Jashuva entered into poetic discourse with his upper caste contemporary Telugu poets and writers. He wrote several poems which scathingly attacked the caste culture and the inhuman practices. When every Telugu writer was invoking national sentiments by writing about Arjuna's heroism in Mahabharata Jashuva counter posed Karna and wrote very melodious poems about Karna's character, patriotism and nationalism. As a result of his poetic strength and literary popularity the Brahmin writers and upper caste landlords had to honour him by presenting him Gandependaram (Gold ankle) which was the highest literary honour at that time.

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The second poet and writer, Boyee Bheemanna was a semi Gandhian and semi Ambedkarite. He also picked up several nationalist themes for writing his lyrical poetry, but by writing his famous play "paleru" (Jeeta) he asserted his Dalit identity. He also translated Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste into Telugu. His daughter, Vijaya Bharathi perhaps is the first Dalit woman to take Ph.D degree from Osmania University in 1968. She later translated the biographies of Ambedkar and Mahatma Phule into Telugu.

THE COMMUNIST AND NAXALITE MOVEMENT

The Communist movement presents an interesting picture. It entered into the Dalitwadas basically as a working class movement and it entered these wadas much more forcefully than any other movement did in early 1930s and 40s. Perhaps because of leaders like P. Sundaraiah[20] who gave up his 'Reddy' title to identify himself with "Iah" nomenclatured caste class social forces. But the Communist party articulated only economic questions and took all the care to see that the SCs did not develop an independent identity by transmigration of Ambedkarism into Marxism.[21] Ambedkar was almost a banned name within communist discourse, though Ambedkar was never as much anti communist as he was anti-Congress. Not only that, surprisingly, the Communist

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movement did not develop a paradigm of its own to tackle the disfigured identity of SCs. A careful examination of Communist literature till the occurrence of Karamchedu shows that it addressed the Dalits as 'Harijans' while claiming themselves to be anti-Gandhians. Communists seemed to be blissfully ignorant of Ambedkar's opposition to Harijanisation as it was meant to mystify their 'untouchable' existence. The mechanical application of dialectical materialism was obvious that only wage and land, they thought, would undo the Brahminical past. Nowhere a semblance of critiquing of Brahminical tradition was done in the Communist theoretical discourse. Though the base superstructure (dependency theory of classical Communism) theory to some extent, was responsible for such indifference to cultural history the internalized Brahminical values among the leaders and cadres were a strong conditioning factor. However, the Communist movement certainly played a significant role in increasing the wages of Dalits as the movement was more of 'economic determinist'. At political level though the Congress party claimed that it was responsible for bringing about the minimum wages act, which benefited the Dalits more than any other section, the Communist mobilization of Dalits was responsible for constant upgradation of minimum wages acts. The blackest spot of the Communist movement, in the early period, was that it did not

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make any effort to create an organic intellectual base from the Dalits themselves. Till the emergence of Naxalite movement it could hardly boast of any visible SC Communist leader, except perhaps, Gunturu Bapanaiah whose name was known to only coastal political circles. Even the entire Telangana Armed Struggle could not produce a single SC leader or ideologue. Of course, from OBCs it produced Nassar a Burrakatha singer and an actor, and Suddala Hanumanthu, a poet and singer whose poems on Vetti, exploitation and heroism of Communist party became the main source of cultural movement. In the political front Nalla Narasimhulu became a known name among the Communist and non-Communist circles, more because of his book on Telangana Armed Struggle than because he was projected as a leader. During the pre-Naxalite era the communist political platforms were only available to upper castes mostly to Kamma, Reddy, Brahmin and Velma intellectuals.[22]

While foreclosing the identity question the Naxalite movement had changed the situation slightly. Several small level activists and leaders from SC, OBC ranks began to spring up. As writer rightly observed, song writing, tune setting and writing of poetry during the Naxalite phase centered around the SC, OBC wadas in the villages and writing theory and speech making still remained an upper caste phenomenon. However, three names became visible from

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the SC, OBCs organic leaders and ideologues K.G. Satyamurthy (an SC) leader, ideologue and writer, K. Rajanna (an OBC) political leader and ideologue and Kancha Ilaiah from the OBC background a civil libertarian, propagandist, a writer and speaker. However, till Karamchedu took place, none of them was conscious of anti-caste ideology, and they were much less rooted in the political discourses of Ambedkar. In the literary and cultural movement, Gaddar (SC) a first rate song composer and a ballad singer, Vangapandu Prasad (SC) a song composer, singer and a performer, Rama Rao (SC) a singer, U. Sambasiva Rao (OBC) a writer, song composer and singer, Anjaiah (SC) the author of the tone setting song "Vuru Manadira," Venkanna (SC) a powerful sorg composer and a host of other SC, BC song composers and singers emerged. Novelists and story writer like Allam Rajaiah (OBC), B.S. Ramulu (OBC) and Sahu (OBC) also emerged from this movement. But all of them were blissfully ignorant about the identity ideology that already became a force in neighboring Maharashtra politics. The walls that traditional upper caste Communist ideologues built around the living monster of caste were still strong between their organic living and consciousness. In a two dimensional (caste and class) society, the consciousness as yet was one dimensional.

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KARAMCHEDU AND AFTER :

Looking from the point of view of the number killed, the Karamchedu incident was not so big, but it was certainly a historic incident. Six Dalits were brutally killed on July 17, 1985 at Karamchedu by the Kamma landlords. The incident started with usual caste cultural sterotype that a Madiga women objected to a Kamma boy using their drinking water tank for buffalo washing. This snowballed into mobilization of Kamma youth in large numbers to attack the Madiga wada leading to chasing of Madiga men and women, beating, torturing and finally brutally killing six men. Subsequent to this incident, all the Madigas of the village, who were known to be normally unimaginative, unassertive, and resigned to their fate and karma, exhibited a collective consciousness, and enmass left the village and reached the nearby town called chirala and established a camp which popularly came to be known as Karamchedu camp.[25]

Within no time, their camp became a camp of Dalit assertion. While the Dalits working in different political parties, not so much OBCs, identified with the Karamchedu camp. The upper caste leaders and intellectuals working in different political parties sympathised with them. Of course, the bourgeosie Kammas felt embarrassed by the

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incident because it broke the myth of Kamma progressiveness. The Kammas were a caste that emerged from the anti-brahmin movement of former Madras state led by a Kamma leader, Tripuraneni Ramaswami Choudari (1887-1943). While the local Madiga youth Tella Zedson and Koti James picked up the courage and confidence to assert Dalit identity, two leaders Kathi Padma Rao and Bojja Tarakam joined them to help create, in the camp, an identity of its own. Kathi Padma Rao was a youth who was teaching in a degree college of Guntur district, was known in coastal districts as a rationalist and an orator. Bojja Tarakam was a Government pleader in Andhra Pradesh High Court, a Naxalite sympathizer cum relatively more conscious Ambedkarite, a son of an East Godavari Republican Party leader and Son-in-law of Boyee Bheemanna. He resigned his Government pleadership and camped at the Karamchedu shibiram along with Padma Rao. These two persons suddenly became all Andhra Pradesh names. They also made Ambedkar their guiding spirit. For the first time Ambedkar was presented as a symbol synthesizer of social and philosophical transformation. The reconstruction of Ambedkar's image as a movement builder and political and ideological theoretician became a pain in the neck of upper caste communist leaders because that was going to have implications to their Dalit cadre base.[27]

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Karamchedu created a rupture in Communist discourse, more particularly among the Naxalites. The upper caste leaders and ideologues attempted to hang on to their 'caste blind" phraseology by couching the attack of Kamma landlords in class language defining it as a "landlord attack against labourers".[28] But the Karamchedu shibiram restructured the discourse by constantly issuing statements that it was a struggle between kamma upper castes and suppressed Madigas. The communist theoreticians were very inconvenient with this kind of characterization of the attack. However, many Dalitbahujan activists working within the communist parties came to a conclusion that the reality expresses itself in caste-class terms. It was a fact that the attack was led by Kamma landlords but even poor kammas also were with in the attackers. Kamma landlords vs Madiga coolies was a phraseology that expressed the caste-class dimension of the reality.[29]

As usual there was this rumour that got circulated that the Madiga men "teased and harassed" the Kamma women dividing the Communist camp on caste lines. Some upper caste leaders and ideologues said "yes" it is a problem and the SC, OBC activists disagreed with that position because they themselves were a witness in their childhood or adulthood to many upper caste youth 'keeping or raping' SC and OBC girls or women.[30] In no single case the

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punishment for such an offence was death. On the contrary it was only treated as weak sexual morals of lower caste women. In fact, till the Andhra based Marxist feminists politicised the sexuality question and argued that sexual immorality is male centered and even the Communist leaders would draw the conclusion that many lower caste women were of loose character and hence they invite the upper caste men to keep them. Of course, they would condemn the rape but without any amount of anger.[31] The distinction between 'rape and keeping' blurs only to define every rape as part of keeping. It made many dalitbahujan activists to realize that Marxist materialism did not sink deep enough to cut into the caste layers of the Communist consciousness. The Karamchedu, Chunduru and Chelukurthi incidents borne out the fact that women's sexuality is the key link to maintaining the hierarchical structures of caste. The male sexuality is caste free, it can express itself against any subject woman and yet retain its caste status. Quite opposite to that if an upper caste woman engages herself in sexual intercourse with lower caste male that female's sexuality is castigated and the punishment for that could go to the extent of killing both the upper caste woman and the lower caste man who had entered into the relationship.[32]

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A Communist dialect should have unfolded and the discourse should have started about caste and sexuality much before so that an understanding should have emerged among the communist ranks. But the caste blindness was responsible for such an incorrect understanding.

Karamchedu camp also focussed the militancy of Dalit women very sharply. The Dalit women stood in the forefront of the struggle. Of course, at one level the male leadership used the woman's militancy as a check against the state repression and also it did not put any special effort to push any visible woman leader from among the ranks of Dalit women. Secondly, the ground reality was such that there were hardly any educated women who could push themselves to the status of leading cadre. The women's militancy, therefore, expressed as mass collective militancy.[33] However, it must be pointed out that with regard to man-woman relationship the Dalit movement drew heavily from patriarchal society on the one hand and the patriarchal communist and bourgeois parties on the other. Though Phule, Periyar and Ambedkar gave more emphasis on women's equality than their contemporary communist and bourgeois leaders it has not yet acquired an organizational legitimacy. The discourse on man-woman equality has not become a key discourse even in the Dalit movement.

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The Chirala Dalit Shibiram first settled its scores with the state and bourgeois parties. Neither the Telugu Desam Chief Minister nor the opposition leaders were allowed to take it for a ride by shedding crocodile tears. Even the illiterate masses resisted the state and the sympathy doles of ruling politicians. What Veeramma, a Dalit woman, told the Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao who took fruits to offer her in the hospital is worth quoting: "Ayya we do not eat such fruits, you are the rulers. These fruits are yours. We live on a handful of rice we earn from our daily labour. Why do I need fruits? After your becoming the Chief Minister, all your relatives in the villages became Chief Ministers too. They made us their targets. We are now totally shattered. Our families are broken and drowned in blood.... Now what have we got to fear"?.[34] The Shibiram did not spare all those 'Harijan' leaders and bureaucrats who were part of the State and were toeing the line of ruling parties. All of them were characterized as Dalit Dalaries (Dalit Comprodors). The Dalit leaders working in the Telugu Desham Party and Congress Party were characterized as Dalit Dalaries. They began to distrust all those Khadi clad leaders, who were the link between the state institutions and Dalit wadas. Khadi dress and Dalarihood became almost identical. Thus Karamchedu Shibiram became a point of departure for

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conscious Dalits getting disassociated with ruling parties and it also became the beginning of a search for their own political agency.

The Shibiram, established after the bloodshed became the center of creation of new ideas. It did not allow the word 'Harijan' to be used in the camp. The demand was either to use the word 'Dalit or Mala, Madiga'. We must be called what we are was the demand and they seemed to have been suddenly reminded of the argument of Ambedkar that 'If we are the sons and daughters of God-- which God is that? What about the Hindu upper castes? Whose sons and daughters are they?[35] The Communist leaders also never thought about these questions. Since calling them Malas and Madigas was appearing to be derogatory they too resorted to calling them as Harijans. The Communist nomenclature Coolollu (laborers) neither created an identity for them nor did it accrue them class benefits. Both educated and illiterate Dalits seemed to have become aware of this factor. In fact the nomenclature coolollu was as derogatory as the nomenclature Mala. Madiga, Chakali and Mangali as the name coolollu was putting them low in the hierarchy. All over the coastal districts the nomenclature 'Harijan' was in crisis, and the nomenclature Dalit was gaining credibility and acceptability.

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The leaders sitting at the Shibiram quickly decided to create a political platform for themselves and they formed Andhra Pradesh Dalit Maha Sabha then and there. Bojja Tarakam was made its founder president and Kathi Padma Rao as General Secretary. The most significant decision that they took was that however sympathetic the upper caste leaders, writers, poets could be, they should not be allowed to occupy the Shibiram and the Dalit Maha Sabha platform.

For many Dalits sitting at the Shibiram the most respectable political forces were the Naxalite Groups. But when the most powerful Naxalite group 'Peoples War' sent its two representatives, Gaddar (SC) and P. Varavara Rao (Brahmin) the Shibiram allowed only Gaddar to sit on the dais and refused to allow Varavara Rao. Many upper caste Communist leaders had to go back without addressing the Shibiram members.[36] For the first time all the Communist ranks began to debate about the identity assertion of Dalit leaders and cadres. The upper caste Communists and revolutionaries, of course, condemned Tarakam and Padma Rao, to have become casteist arrogant upstarts. The SC and OBC cadres, though were nodding their heads in presence of the leaders, heart in heart, they were in agreement with the Shibiram's decision because the platforms of even Communist parties, by and large were manipulated to be

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upper caste platforms.[37] Sitting on dais, addressing the audience, chairing the small or big meetings all began to acquire new meanings. The upper caste Communist cadres did ask - is it wrong to be born in the Brahmin family? Did one chose the family in which one was born? Is not birth in a family accidental and for that should one be banned from occupying a dais? Should an upper caste person's speech become unhearable? And so on. The answers that the Dalit Communist discourse threw up were very interesting. Did the Dalits chose their caste to have been born in it? Is it not the very accident of birth in the Dalit families that kept them untouchables and unhearables? Why is it that the Communist and revolutionary parties did not take up a campaign against the caste system which was determining the socio political and economic placements of people? Why were the platforms not available to Dalits before they began to raise these questions? If merit of speech making is the criteria why is it that the Dalits on their independent platform could prove themselves as equally good speakers? How is it that the Dalit movement began to throw up good writers, speakers who began to get all Andhra visibility only after they established their own platforms?

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Who were taking all the decision even in the midst of such a crisis at the Shibiram? Tarakam, Kathi Padma Rao, Tella Zedson and Koti James, Bathula Punnaiah etc, who were not at all used to the Communist Central Committee' type of debates were proving one point beyond any doubt that becoming a leader or a decision maker is based on the opportunity that one gets in an organisation. If opportunity is not given it must be grabbed but to grab an opportunity a socio-political environment is necessary and this was what the Communist parties were expected to create and that is what they did not do. The responsibility for such non-creation of Dalit organic intellectuals must rest on the first generation leaders, writers, and poets of the Communist movement.

What were the Dalit masses, particularly of coastal districts, doing? They on their own began to mobilize, rice, dal, vegetables, money to support the Chirala Shibiram. They organized Dharnas, Bandhs, rasta rokhos and massive public meetings only to be addressed by Dalit and OBC organic leaders. Of course, the Dalit dalaries were also kept away. The biggest rally they organized at Vijayawada was attacked by the police and Kathi Padma Rao was arrested in the very public meeting where about a lakh people were present. To get him released further rail rokhos, rasta rokhos, and gharaoing of the Chief Ministers were done

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without getting much support from the Left or Right forces. The Dalit women have shown remarkable courage and confidence. In every struggle they were in the forefront not because they were used as a cover to avoid repression but because they wanted to fight the upper caste enemy whose youth abused them, humiliated them, and sexually exploited them in course of their agrarian operations. Suddenly there was Dalit unity, suddenly they found the words to abuse back, mock the upper caste culture, those who were at the receiving end began to pay back in the same coin. Those who had been abused as Lazy, drunkards, immorals, suddenly realized that they were more virtuous and morally incorruptible than the upper castes themselves. The men and women would hold post-dinner meetings to discuss what their leaders said at different public meetings. Certainly in every Dalitwadas Tarakam and Padma Rao became their heroes. Padma Rao's oratory skills, his public attacks on the upper caste culture, his way of digging the past of upper castes-particularly man-women relationships, his scathing attack on upper castes Gods, their culture, behaviour, habit became pointers of courage. This author himself was a witness to how some upper caste leaders, particularly upper caste Communists, a section of civil libertarians were becoming bitter of Padma Rao's speeches. Of course, the Kamma forces spread rumours that Dalit leaders, particularly

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Padma Rao was abusing their Gods and their women in public - the rumour of plans to kill him were very much in the air. Though Padma Rao was not a student of history, his construction of history was based on his knowledge of Sanskrit texts and Telugu literary texts. Here was a man who could hardly utter an English word but he was a powerful speaker in Telugu and became the source of debate for one reason in the Dalitwadas and for another reason in upper caste wadas.

Tarakam who is known for his soft spokeness became the hard hitter in the public meetings. His character became a source of strength to the movement. He would build a critique of the Andhra upper caste state and society. Is it a Reddy raj or Kamma raj, Why should only Reddys or Kammas become the Chief Ministers of the state, Why should only Brahmins become the Governors of the State? There are about 150 castes in Andhra Pradesh, Why not any other caste person become the Chief Minister, Why not any other person become the Governor of the state. From state he would go to assess the caste character of the Delhi administration. Why only Nehru, why only Lal Bahadur Shastry, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi should become the Prime Minister? Why not a Madiga or a Mala person become the Prime Minister? Why not a chakali or a Mangali person become the Prime Minister? Why were all institutions from

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village to Panchayat office, to Prime Minister office headed by upper caste even though they are small minority among the population? Why was land and industries became their private property? Why were state institutions made their private property? and so on.[38]

Tarakam's speeches became an intensive debate of discussion among Dalitwadas. They would say unlike Padma Rao, Tarakam does not hurt the upper castes and also he would ask for our share in every thing in the civil societal property, the state institution and so on. The masses engage in an intensive debate as to which strategy is correct, Tarakam's or Padma Rao's. The youth would support Padma Rao and the more ideological oriented and old people would prefer the strategy of Tarakam. The point, however, is that for the first time persons who came from their own families, who did not carry an aura of money, cars, bungalows became their heros whose words became a subject of discourse. This itself was a transformation. Even when they discussed about Communist leaders like Puchalapalli Sundiariah, Chandra Rajeshwar Rao (th top most Communist leaders of old generation) they were those Reddy and Kamma Doras who turned Communists. They came from bungalows, they could afford cars. It was a discussion about the 'others' who were sympathetic with 'us'. Whereas Tarakam and Padma Rao were the organic 'our' persons, who were

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making history, who were claiming of being its leaders, who came from their own families. Suddenly, hundreds of Dalit cadres became conscious of the strength of words and deeds of their leaders. For the first time they saw persons belonging to their wadas are both leaders and cadres. They were not merely flag carriers but, speakers, writers and decision makers. This made all the difference. Their feeling of elation was no less than what it was to native Indians when they were being led by the Indian upper caste leaders against the white Doras (The Britishers). In meeting after meeting the dalit youth keep on discussing these historical factors. They would ask questions about the inadequate knowledge of Brahmins, Reddys, Velmas and Kammas in relation to production. All this forms part of making Dalit history. These questions they could never ask when they were part of other political parties headed by upper castes, left or right.

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Till 1985 for many Dalitbahujans Ambedkar really remained "undiscovered" and Phule's name was not known at all. For many Dalitbahujans of Andhra Pradesh the post Karamchedu period was like opening a new chapter in their life. To come to know that Phule a 'Mali' who is called 'Are' by everyone also got the title Mahatma, was a rediscovery of the whole history itself. For the first time, they realized their own kith and kin also spoke

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philosophy and they too can become philosophers. This was perhaps, what post Karamchedu was to many Dalitbahujans.

From Karamchedu to Chundur : The post Karamchedu consciousness forced many Dalitbahujans to break from the one dimensional thinking. Ambedkar entered in a big way into Dalitbahujan reading list. His basic work Annihilation of Caste has changed the class consciousness into caste-class consciousness.[39] The first booklet that was published which broke the theoretical silence of Marxism was 'Kula Nirmulana-Oka Marxist Drukpadham' (Abolition of caste a Marxist view point) by a team of young organic intellectuals who were trained in the radical Marxist discourse. This booklet put forth a new argument that caste has basically divided the working class by fragmenting them. Unless Indian Marxism works out its new strategy of building up anti-caste struggle as a pre condition for forging the class unity the revolution does not consummate. But to do this the Indian communist movement must break from its caste-blindness and that becomes possible only when the organic anti-caste intellectuals take the political ideological and organizational leadership. This booklet has also raised the issue of the whole question of caste, base and superstructure' and made the first statement that caste is both a base and super structural construct. Therefore, abolition of caste must

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become a programmatic issue rather than being a tactical issue. It should become part of revolutionary strategy itself.[40] Examining these questions in the background of Karamchedu and formation of a Dalit Maha Sabha certainly made a different impact on the mind of Dalit intellectuals, particularly of those who were trained in Marxian dialectics. The post-Karamchedu period produced two song composers specifically from the point of view of Ambedkar's thought- Masterji and Pavan Prasad - one established a Dalit cultural wing, called Dalit Kalamandali and another established Jana Chitanya Mandali. These two cultural teams have consciously set a Dalit tone which mainly propagated the Ambedkar's thought all over Andhra Pradesh. Some of the songs are extremely lyrical and focus on Dalit history. For example, one song written by Masterji lists out Gautama Buddha, Basava, Naryanaguru, Phule, Ambedkar and Periyar Ramaswami as Dalit conscientisers.

Meanwhile from mid 1989 on wards a socio-political journal called 'Nalupu' (Black) a fortnightly was started with Bojja Tarakam as its editor. Though the editorial board also consisted people belonging to upper castes but all of them were (and are) politically and ideologically sympathetic to Dalit cause. The journal was financed and circulated by Hyderabad Book Trust' a popular organization set up for translating popular and progressive literature from English to Telugu and it published several good books

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in Telugu itself. This journal became the major ideological organ of Dalit theory. This is the first popular journal to be edited and with major theoretical contributions coming from Dalit organic intellectuals themselves. Nalupu published series of articles on caste struggles and it raised a theoretical debate on the course of abolition of caste and capturing of political power in every organisation. Nalupu published articles which propagated the theoretical and ideological questions that Phule and Ambedkar raised in their writings. Though the journal was published just for four years (1989-93) it could create a whole set of Dalit writers, journalists, poets and song composers. It published several reports that other print media was not willing to publish on atrocities against Dalits, on creative struggles of Dalits, and on Dalit resistances. Almost every issue was carrying a biographical sketch on grass root Dalit activists and leaders. For four years it worked as Dalit training camp in several fields. When the financial burden forced its closure in 1993, the educated Dalits and Dalit communists felt that their rudder vanished.[41]

Meanwhile K.G. Satyamurthy and U. Sambasivi Rao formed a revolutionary group called Marxist Leninist Center. It opened up a new debate on the Indian democratic revolu-

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tion. This group tried to argue that unless Marxism and Ambedker's anti caste theory are interwoven the democratic revolution cannot be achieved.

K.G. Satyamurthy, a Dalit revolutionary, was a forceful poet and speaker who made a real impact on Dalit movement. Satyamurthy became a symbol of sacrifice and honesty as he suffered underground life for 20 years. This group started a journal called Edureeta (swimming against tide) that began to make the attempt of blending Marxism and Ambedkarism into a new caste-class theory.[42] Meanwhile the CPI (ML) headed by a lower rung OBC K. Rajanna, politically and ideologically took a stand that Phule and Ambedkar could be treated as integral anti-caste social revolutionaries.[43] Though another major revolutionary group, CPI (ML) People War Group theoretically did not spell out its assessment of Phule and Ambedkar's contribution to the social transformation, its pro-Dalit role after the Karamchedu massacre particularly the assassination of Chechuramaiah the main accused was welcomed by the Dalits of Andhra Pradesh at large.

The most significant turn in the Maoist (ML) and Dalit movements of Andhra took place with the 1990 anti-Mandal agitation. The Maoists and Dalit associations had forged a broad pro-mandal front and this is when the

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otherwise indifferent educated OBCs began to appreciate the trend to unite SCs and OBCs.[44] The arrogant anti-mandal propaganda of upper castes forced many sensitive political groups to realize that Dalitism is a necessary phase of history and the nexus between upper castes and ruling classes is very close. Thus the post Mandal developments coupled with post Karamchedu consciousness changed the political atmosphere radically. Dalitism has come to occupy a definite place in the agenda of all political parties.

When the Chundur carnage occurred on August 8, 1991 the political discourse was on the path of this new convulsion. At Chunduru (Guntur district) 8 Dalits were brutally murdered by Reddy landlords and this triggered off another phase of struggle. This struggle further strengthened the Dalitisation process.[45] By that time the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) which became a force in North India opened its Andhra wing (in 1989) and subsequently the BSP used this newly emerging sociopolitical base for its mobilization. After the SP-BSP combine came to power in Utter Pradesh by stalling the Hindu communal forces (BJP) capturing Delhi, the Dalitbahujan political forces in Andhra Pradesh began to organize themselves on independent lines. In 1994 Assembly elections the BSP contested almost all the seats. Though it could not win a single

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seat it created a very conscious leadership base at the village, mandal, district and state level. In every political party and group the question of political power to Dalitbahujans has become a mind boggling question. This points to a definite political trend in A.P. It, appears, that the future discourse would be that of caste and class but neither that of one dimensional class nor that of one dimensional caste. It would be a sort of synthesization of Marxism and Ambedkarism.

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1. The Dalitbahujan history of Maharashtra has been written and commented upon mainly by three western scholars, see Gail omvedt, cultural revolt in a colonial society, scientific socialist education trust, Bombay, 1976. Ambedkar : Democratic revolution in India, sage, 1993, Eleanor Zelhot, DR. B.R. Ambedkar and the Mahar Movement, Ph. D. thesis and Rosalind O'Hanlon, Caste, Conflict and Ideology, Orient Longman. The Dravida Khajagam Movement of Tamil Nadu was written by Washbrook, D.A., The Emergence of Provincial Politics, The Madras Presidency 1890-1920, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, Baker, Christopher John, the politics of South India 1920-1937. See Pandian M.S.S., Beyond Colonical Crumbs; Cambridge School, Identity, Politics and Dravidan Movement(s), EPW, Feb. 18 - 25, 1995.

2. Since India being a caste society the Gramscian mode of class organic intellectuals (see Gramsci's Prison Note Books) also do not do justice to writing of history of caste struggles because caste constructed consciousness in different ways than class did in European societies.

3. Both Ambedkar and Periyar analyzed and understood the Indian society as basically being caste society- see Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1-5, and also see Periyar, E.V.R., Collected Works, Vol. I, The Periyar Self Respect Propaganda Institution, Madras, 1992 - but the present approach is to study Indian society as a caste-class society.

4. See Ranajit Guha and others, Subaltern Studies, Volumes 1-8, OUP, Delhi.

5. Nassar was the first generation burrakatha (a folk form of story telling) performer. He propagated Communist ideology and also composed Burrakatha stories on Telangana Armed Struggle, etc, in a form that could attract the mass attention. Nassar was born in an OBC Muslim caste called Dudekula. This is only Muslim caste which is listed in OBC list for the purpose of reservation.

6. Suddala Hanumanthu lived during the Telangana Armed Struggle and wrote several songs. He belonged to a lower OBC caste and was a native of Suddala a village in Nalgonda district where the Armed Struggle concentrated.

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7. Gaddar is a product of Naxalbari Movement. He emerged as a popular ballad singer, performer and song composer. He belongs to Mala caste and his parents were agrarian labourers. Though he belonged to CPI (ML) People War Group (a group that believed in individual annihilation as part of the tactics of its Maoist agrarian revolution). The masses see him as a representative of Naxalite politics. Gaddar lives at Bollaram village near Hyderabad. See Gaddar, Taragani Gani, Jana Natya Mandali Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1992.

8. Anjaiah is another Scheduled Caste song composer who emerged from the ranks of Naxalite politics, particularly from CPI (ML) Janashakti Group. His song

"The village is ours - the wada is ours
Hamlet is ours - we are at every work
Hammer is ours - knife is ours -

has become a tone setting song of the entire revolutionary cultural movement. See, Jana Natya Mandali Patalu, Kranti Parachuranalu, 1990, p. 23.

9. See Jana Natya Mandali Patalu, Op. cit., p.52

Dalit tigers
which fought
with karamchedu landlords "D.T."
There is a hamlet in Karamchedu
The name of the hamlet is Madiga palle ..... So on.

This song became a tone setting song for militant Dalit movement in the post Karamchedu period as Anjaiah's song became a tone setting song to Naxalite movement.

10. Tirupathi, Gautama Buddudu-Bouddha Dharmam (Ed) Ambedkar Memorials Society, Hyderabad 1992.

11. Interview with Tirupathi by the author.

12. Bhagya Reddy Varma (Balaiah) started the Adi-Hindu (that the Scheduled Castes were the earlier Hindus and hence the Brahmins and upper castes have no right to claim that they were superior to SCs) movement. Baghya Reddy Verma's movement though basically concentrated around Hyderabad city it gradually spread to rural areas. The first Adi-Hindu and Adi-Andhra

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Conference took place at Vijayawada in 1917. See Satyanarayana, A. Dalit protest literature in Telugu - A Historical Perspective, EPW, January 21, 1995. Also see D. Ramulu Nayak, M.V. Bhagya Reddy Varma life and mission, unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Dept. of History, Osmania University, Hyderabad, 1992.

13. Kusuma Dharamanna was one of the earliest writers and organisers who emerged from the Coastal districts. His poetic text "Makoddhee Nalla Doratanam" (we do not want this black lordship) was written in 1930 as a response to a Brahmin poet Garimella Satyanarayana who wrote a poetic text "Makoddhee Tella Dora Tanam" (we do not want this white lordship). It appears that Kusma Dharamanna was the first Dalit organic intellectual who differed with all the upper caste nationalists and started a Dalit nationalist movement. See his poems in Jayadheer Tirumala Rao and Ashok Kumar K.P. (Ed) Dalitha Geetalu, Sahiti Circle, Hyderabad, 1993, p.68B. Song "We do't want this black lordship - Lord we do't.

want this black lordship
If we don't get self respect with the rest of all we don't want this black lordship"... so on.

14. Jala Ranga Swamy wrote "Who are untouchables?" (1930), Melukolupu (Awaken) 1930, Malasuddhi (cleaning Malas) 1930. See Tirumala Rao & Ashok Kumar (1993) pp.33 - 53. He also published several other poems along with his wife Jala Mangamma. It appears that Mangamma herself was a writer. Discussion with Boyee Bheemanna by the author on 27-4-95.

15. Nakka China Venkaiah was also a Mala poet. He wrote several poems in 1930s. China Venkaiah's poems like Harijana Keertanalu (Harijana songs) not only critique the Brahminical culture but also appeal to SCs to change their habits and modes of living. In his poetry we can see a serious attempt to Brahmanise Dalits. See Tirumal Rao & Kumar (1993), pp.57-67.

16. When the author toured Coastal districts he met several old people who were associates of Kusuma Dharmanna. There were several stories among people which narrate the heroic struggles that Kusuma Dharamanna conducted. According to Boyee Bheemanna most of the unpublished writings of Dharamanna got burnt. The only surviving

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published speech was reproduced in Nalupu, November 16-December 15, 1992 and January 1, 1993. Dharamanna also published a journal called Jaya Bheri in 1930s.

17. See Annapurna Rajyamulo Akali Chavulu, a report published by Karuvu Adhyayana Brundam, Hyderabad, 1987. Even the SCs who got displaced at Srishailam Project (Mahabub Nagar district) enumerated their family names as Harijan.

18. Gurram Jashuva was the most powerful Dalit poet who brought about a revolutionary change in Telugu literature by introducing untouchability, oppression as essential contents of his powerful poetry. His Kavyam Gabbhilam (Bat) was the first writing to assert the consciousness of black is beautiful. Jashuva's consciousness was so revolutionary while his contemporary Brahmin poet Sri Sri compared communist revolution with the wheels of Vishnu's Chariot (Jagannadhuni radhachakaralu). Jashuva compares SCs with Bat. But till recent days the upper caste communist writers refused to recognise Jashuva as a revolutionary poet. To understand the anti-caste revolutionary character of Jashuva - see Jashuva, Gabbhilam (Bat), Jashuva Foundation, Vijayawada, 1994.

19. Boyee Bheemanna published his first collection of poems Janapada Jabulu in 1940, and his famous Dalit reformist play Paleru was published in 1941. Discussion with the author on April 28, 1995.

20. Puchalapally Sundaraiah's original name was Sunder Rami Reddy. He came from a big landlord family of Nellore district. He consciously changed his name in order to identify with SCs. He was known as Gandhian among Communists. Because of his conscious attempt to Dalitise himself the Communist Party acquired a definite place among SC wadas. But subsequently the CPI and CPM gave up such a reformist thinking and the Communist parties gradually got alienated from Dalitwadas see Sundaraiah, Viplava Pathamu Lo Naa Payanam, Prajashakti Book House, Vijayawada, 1986.

21. The Communists of Andhra prior to 1985 (i.e., Karamchedu incident) never treated Ambedkar as a progressive thinker. They had not written articles assessing his role. Here and there even if one comes

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across comments on Ambedkar, these comments would be negative. But in the post 1985 period the mass organisations of Communist Parties started celebrating Ambedkar's birth annivarsaries. They too have been holding public meetings.

22. The first person to become the Central Committee member of United Communist Party from Andhra was Devulapally Venkateshwar Rao, a Brahmin. Afterwards Chandra Rajeswara Rao, a Kamma became the Secratary of CPI, after the split Sundharaiah, a Reddy, became the General Secretary of CPM. In CPI (ML) Naxalite groups only Reddys like T. Nagi Reddy, Chandra Pulla Reddy, Kondapally Seetharamaiah (Reddy) became leaders.

23. K.G. Satamurthy in earlier phases was more known as Shiva Sagar. See Shivasagar, Udyamam Nelabaludu (collection of poems), Nela Vanka (another collection of poems), K. Rajanna is an underground leader, Secretary of CPI (ML) Janashakti, Andhra Provincial Committee, member of Central Committee. Kancha Ilaiah was organising Secretary of Organisation for the Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR), subsequently he became founder-convenor of the Forum for Democratic Rights (FDR), after this organisation merged with Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee he became one of the Vice-presidents of it. Vangapandu Prasad emerged from the ranks of CPI (ML) Peoples War Group. His song on Chundur massacre has become very popular, see Tirumal Rao & Kumar, op.cit. p.171. Rama Rao is secretary of Arunodaya, a cultural and literary association. He is a good singer. U. Sambhashiva Rao was working-editor of Edurecta and some of his songs on Dalits have become very popular, See U. Sambashiva Rao, Patha Pata Saxiga Kotha pata paduta, Dalita Rachayitala, Kalakarula, Medhavula Aikhya Vedika, A.P. Publication, Hyderabad, 1993.

Venkanna emerged from CPI (ML) Janashakti ranks, he belongs to Madiga agrarian labour family. Perhaps he is the youngest of the noted song composers. His songs have a descriptive narrative about Dalitbahujan productive culture. For details see Venkanna, Ekunatham Mota, Arunodaya Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1994.

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24. Allam Rajaiah, an OBC wrote several revolutionary stories. Though in his writings he never constructed caste as a political category. His stories and novels reflected the Dalitbahujan life styles. Sahu is yet another creative writer who wrote short stories and novels. See Komaram Bheemu, Sweta Ratulu.

B.S. Ramulu is more a caste conscious writer who emerged from the revolutionary groups. Though his early writings like Batukuporu (novel on Beedi workers) Palu did not analyse caste with Dalit consciousness, his subsequent writings like Gatitarkika Tatva Darshanam, Vishala Sahitya Akadami, Karimnagar, 1992, Ambedkarism and Socialism, Vishala Sahitya Akadami, 1994. etc., problamatised caste. In fact one can see a clear demarcation between the writings of some of these writers before Karamchedu occured and after Karamchedu occured.

25. For details see Karamchedu, booklet published by Salaha Hyderabad, 1985, also see Newspapers published from Vijayawada from July 18 to 30, 1985.

26. Tripura Neni Rama Swami Choudari (1887 - 1943) was a lawyer and political activist who started an anti-brahmin movement. He wrote several plays which displayed anti-brahmin consciousness. The most well known among his writings is Shambuka Vadha (1914), Kaviraja Sahitya Viharam, Gudivada, 1988.

27. When the Karamchedu Shibiram was on, the author was part of OPDR. The discourses in the Shibiram became a point of serious discussion within OPDR. The upper castes within OPDR were considering the Karamchedu mode of discourse as a dangerous discourse.

28. Most of the pamphlets printed by Communist parties and revolutionary organisations avoided mentioning caste names of both attackers and the victims.

29. Several Dalit ML activists wrote poems in the post Karamchedu period. In all such organic poems they expressed the view that caste is the main institutional structure which conditioned the consciousness. See, the poetic collections of Cheruku Sudhakar, Shambhuka, Sankam Vaddaiah, Pavana Prasad, Masterji, U. Sambashiva Rao, etc. See, Dalita Geethalu, Op. Cit., 1993.

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30. These rumours were very well spread at the time of Karamchedu incident. Manava Rama Rao, an old Kamma revolutionary told this author that the Mala Madigas teasing the upper caste girls is a major problem. Both CPI and CPM Kamma leaders also believed this kind of stories. But no where they documented their opinion. From the Karamchedu incident on wards, the Kamma consciousness and Kamma progressiveness came under attack.

31. K. Lalitha, Rama Melkote, Susitharu, Veena Shatrugna and others, Manakuteliani Mana Charitra Sthree Shakti Sanghttana, Publication, 1988.

32. Ilaiah, Kancha, Caste and Women's Sexuality - A study of Chunduru and Chelukurthi, Mainstream, May 23, 1992.

33. The author discussed about the day-to-day militant functioning of Karamchedu women with Bojja Tarakam, Kathi Padma Rao, Bathula Punnaiah and Koti James. They all think that women's militancy played a key role in conducting the day-to-day struggles.

34. See Karamchedu, op.cit.

35. Ambedkar, What Congress and Gandhi have done to untouchables?, Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, 1991.

36. When Varavara Rao and other upper caste leaders went to the Shibiram they were not allowed to speak. It became a point of discussion. Several Virasam (Viplava Rachayitala Sangham) members asked this author whether such a step is justified. When this author discussed with several Communist/Revolutionary Dalit youth, they said that it was a justified step. They feel that it was important to have independent platforms for Dalits and the upper castes need not aggrandize Dalit platforms too.

37. Prior to Karamchedu no Communist parties/groups promoted any Dalit speakers or leaders. Several Dalitbahujan activists working in Communist/revolutionary organisations told this author that the Communist/revolutionary organisations were consciously suppressing Dalitbahujans and consciously promoting upper castes. Many said that within the organisation coming from upper caste/feudal families has not become a disadvantage but, has become a virtue.

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38. The author was present on the diases when these two leaders - Bojja Tarakam and Kathi Padma Rao - were speaking at many meetings. During the post Karamchedu period there were several attacks on public meetings where Tarakam and Padma Rao went to address the public meetings. See, Ilaiah, Kancha Kammas, Kapus and Dalits, Frontier, September 3, 1988. This article discusses about the attack on a public meeting at Velivennu, West Godavari district, on July 24, 1988.

39. Ilaiah, Kancha, The Chundur Carnage - the struggle of Dalits, At Cross-roads: Dalit Movement Today, Sandeep Pendse (ed), Vikas, Adhyana Kendra, Bombay, 1994. pp. 95-102.

40. Kula Nirmulana - Oka Marxist Drukpadham, Nuutana Praja Swamya Vedika, 1987.

41. See Nalupu, Hyderabad Book Trust Publication from June 1989 to June 1993.

42. See Edureetha, Hyderabad 1991-1995 and also Ilaiah, Kancha Rethinking Dalit Movement, Frontier, December 14, 1991.

43. See Janashakti, Central Organ CPI (ML), Vijayawada.

44. Ilaiah. K., Paranna Bukkulu Pratibha Gurinchi Matladutunnai, booklet, Prajaswamy Hakkula Vedika, 1990.

45. For details, Chunduru Massacre, EPW, September 7, 1991 and also Ilaiah, Kancha, At Cross Roads: Dalit Movements To Day, op.cit.

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पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

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